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(54) **GRATING BASED
MULTIPLEXER/DEMULTIPLEXER
COMPONENT**

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385/10, 14, 18, 31, 39, 52

See application file for complete search history.

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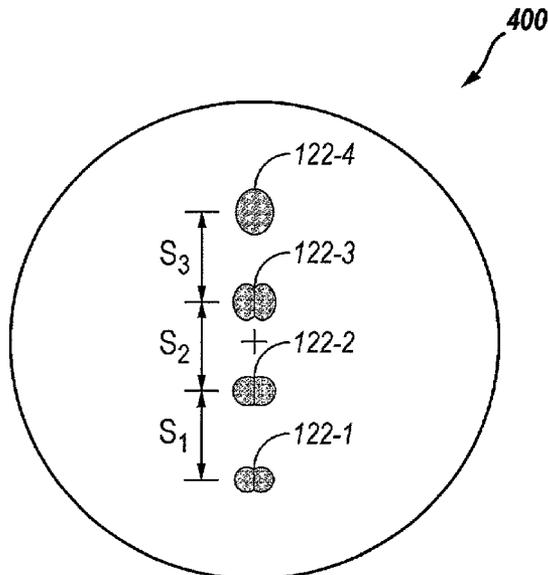
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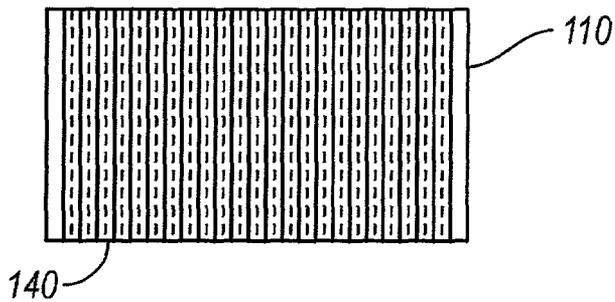
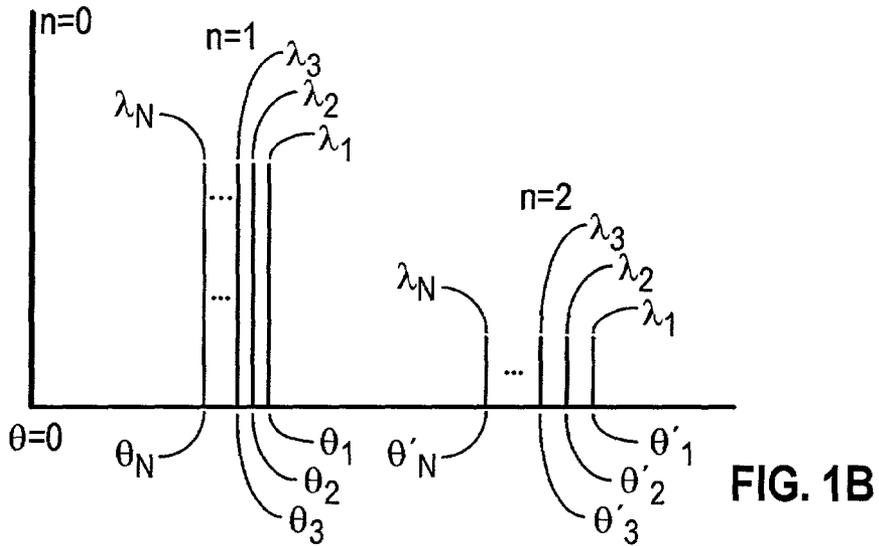
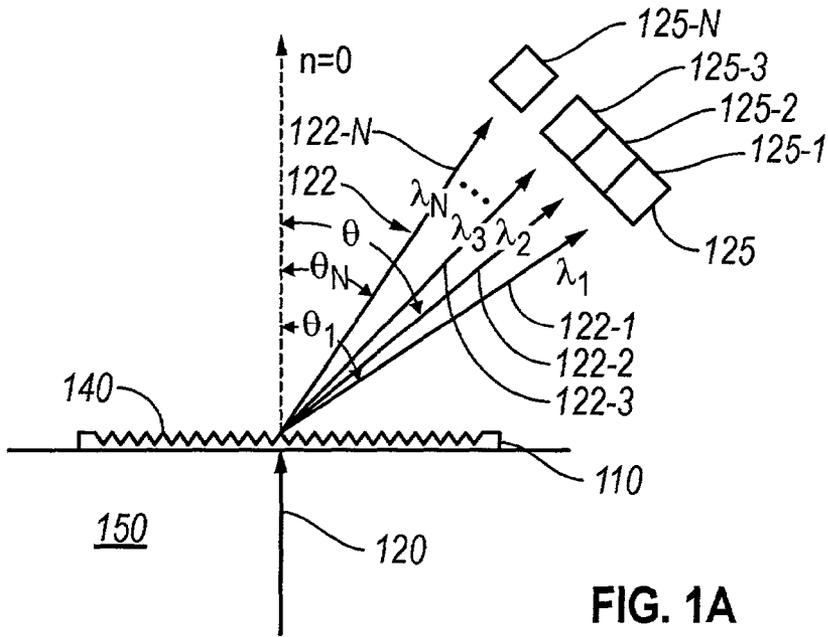
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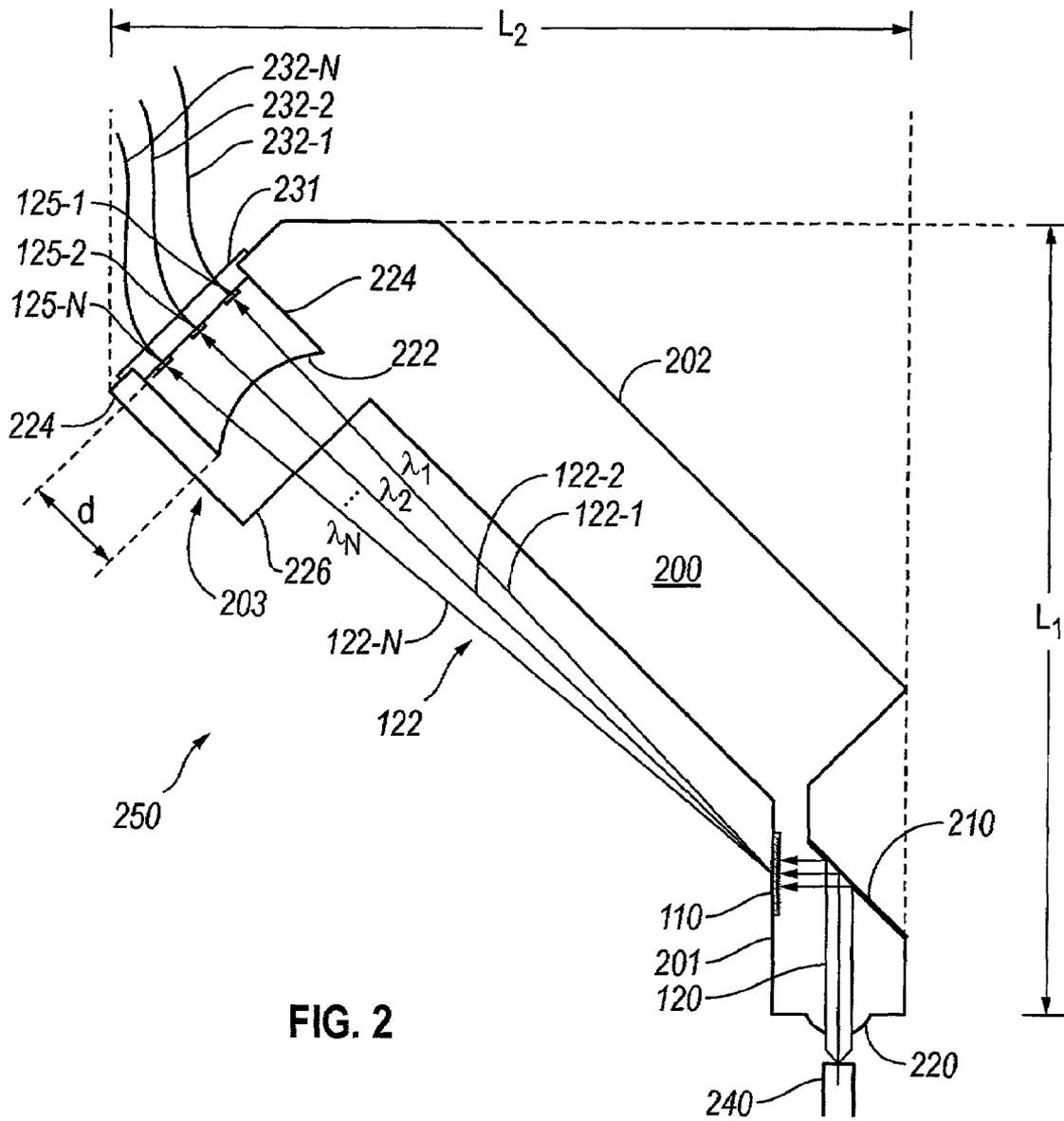
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A grating based demultiplexer module is described. The
module includes an integrally formed first section, second
section, and third section. The first section includes a dif-
fraction grating formed on the surface of the first section and
directs a WDM beam onto the internal surface of the
diffraction grating. The third section is positioned to receive
angularly separated light from the external surface of the
diffraction grating. In some embodiments, the third section
can direct individual beams of the angularly separated light
onto the surface of optical detectors. The third section
provides structural support and maintains the alignment
between the first section and the third section.

16 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets







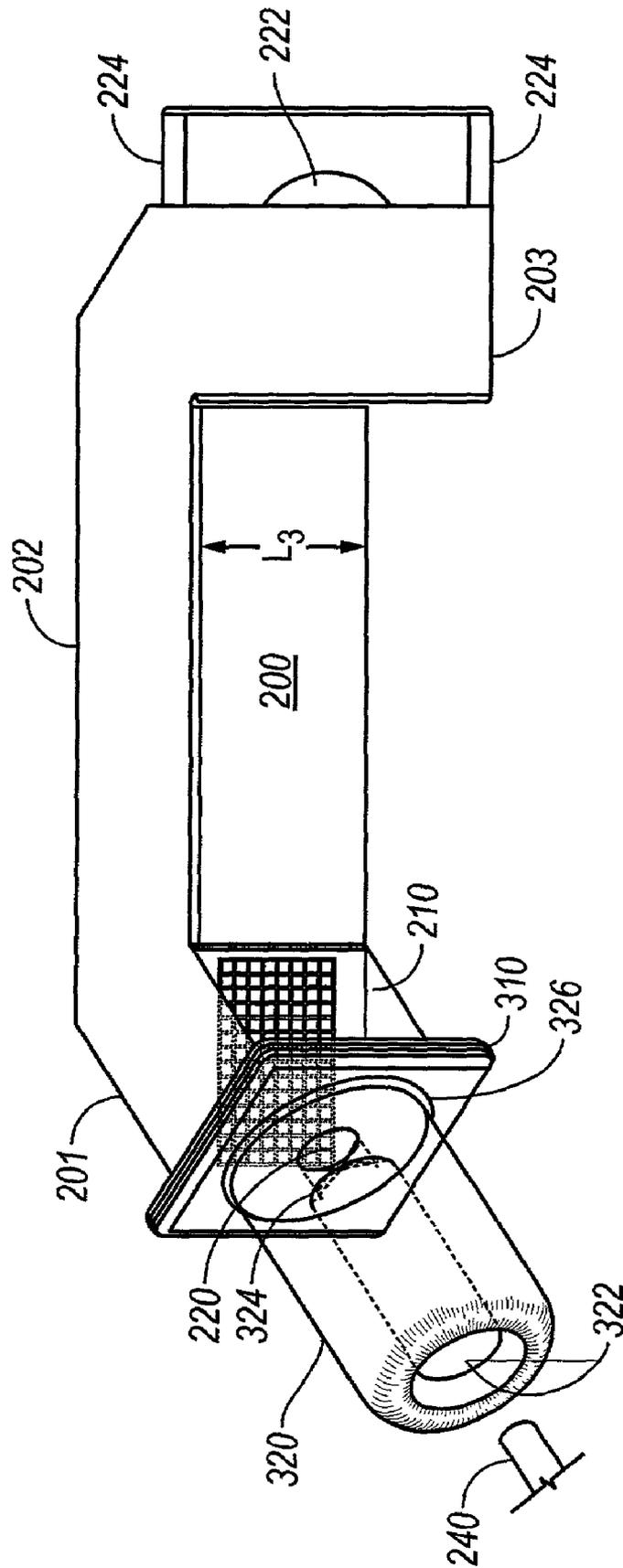


FIG. 3A

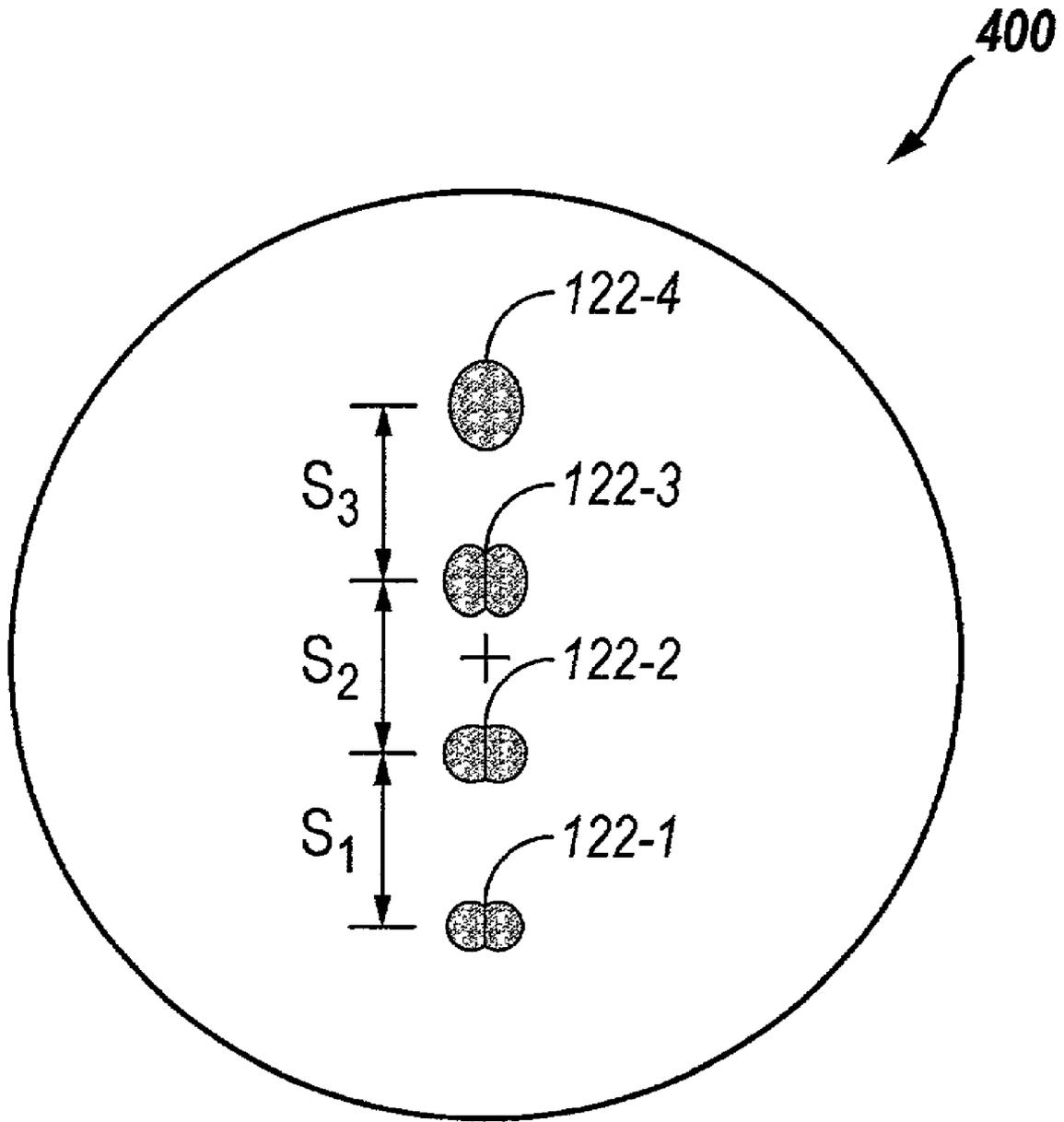


FIG. 4

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GRATING BASED MULTIPLEXER/DEMULTIPLEXER COMPONENT

BACKGROUND

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a multiplexer or demultiplexer optical component and, in particular, to a multiplexer or demultiplexer for a wavelength division multiplexed optical system.

2. Discussion of Related Art

Wavelength division multiplexing has become a standard in optical networks over the last few decades. Wavelength division multiplexing (WDM) exploits the potential bandwidth of optical fibers by transmitting data over several channels on the same fiber. Each channel is transmitted on the optical fiber at a different wavelength. The rate of data transmission over the fiber, then, can be increased by a factor of M, where M is the number of channels (i.e., the number of different wavelengths) being transmitted over the fiber.

Recently, an explosion of WDM technologies has appeared on the market. Systems having 8, 16, and 32 channels have become commonplace. Dense WDM, DWDM, for example, can have 32 channels following an ITU grid with 0.8 nm wavelength separation. However, in order to effectively utilize the bandwidth of the optical fiber, optical signals must be multiplexed and demultiplexed onto the fiber.

In WDM systems, optical signals are transmitted over a set of M channels. The M channels are multiplexed at the transmitter so that M wavelengths of light are simultaneously transmitted on an optical fiber to a receiver system. At the receiver system, the M channels are demultiplexed into optical signals transmitted at individual wavelengths of light. The individual wavelengths of light can then be directed to photodetectors so that the optical signals can be converted into electrical signals for processing by subsequent electronic circuitry.

In some demultiplexing systems, an optical fiber can be directly attached to a dielectric waveguide. The waveguide geometry exploits interference and/or diffraction in order to separate different wavelength constituents of the input light beam. These systems are difficult to fabricate, have large insertion losses, and are only applicable to single-mode fibers.

Demultiplexing can be accomplished with diffraction gratings, prisms, or filters, for example. The major problem with such devices is that they often include bulky and costly lenses and such which are very hard to reliably align, leading to large manufacturing costs and a bulky final product. Conventionally, most WDM or DWDM demultiplexer systems include filter-based demultiplexers, primarily do to the fact that formation of gratings in glass are more expensive to fabricate than are filters.

In the past few years, with the advent of high data rate communications, the concept of wide WDM (WWDM) (channel spacings of ~25 nm) has been proposed and is currently being actively considered as a standard for 10 Gigabit Ethernet and Fiber Channel communication systems. Currently, demultiplexer systems being proposed for use in WWDM systems have involved filter based demultiplexer systems. However, filter based demultiplexer systems are expensive, primarily because of the assembly costs due to the small filters and multiple other components which require time consuming alignment and assembly. Furthermore, the design of a filter based demultiplexer system is not

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scalable to systems having more channels. Also, the design of the filter based systems cannot be scaled down to small physical beam separation distances due to limitation on the size of filters and beam clipping. Finally, filter based demultiplexer systems require complicated alignment of several subassemblies.

Therefore, there is a need for a less expensive and more versatile demultiplexer system for utilization in WWDM, WDM or DWDM systems.

SUMMARY

In accordance with the present invention, a demultiplexer with a diffraction grating for separating the separate wavelengths of light is presented. A demultiplexer according to the present invention includes a grating, which spatially separates the separate wavelengths of light representing individual channels on a wavelength grid, integrally formed on a demultiplexer module. The wavelength grid can be any grid, including those grids commonly utilized in WDM, DWDM, or WWDM optical systems.

A demultiplexer module according to the present invention includes a first section, a second section integrally formed with the first section, and a third section integrally formed with the first and second sections. The first section receives a WDM beam and directs the WDM beam onto an internal surface of a diffraction grating integrally formed on a surface of the first section. The diffraction grating, then, has an internal surface internal to the first section and an external surface external to the first section. The diffraction grating angularly separates beams of individual wavelengths from the WDM beam and provides those beams at the external surface of the diffraction grating. The third section is positioned to receive the angularly separated beams. The second section provides structural support for the demultiplexer module and also relatively positions the third section with respect to the first section.

In some embodiments, the first section can also include an internal reflective surface for directing the WDM beam onto the internal surface of the diffraction grating. The internal reflective surface, which is internal to the first section, can rely on total internal reflection or, in some embodiments, can be coated on an external surface of the first section opposite the internal reflective surface of the first section to enhance the internal reflection. The coating, for example, can be thin films provided to enhance reflection or can be a thin film of gold or silver backing.

In some embodiments, the first section can further include a collimating lens to receive the WDM beam from an optical fiber. Further, the third section can further include a focusing lens to couple the angularly separated beams onto a detector array or into individually optical fibers.

A demultiplexer module according to the present invention can be formed, in some embodiments, from an optical plastic, in a single piece, removing any requirements for alignment of separate components of the first, second and third sections. Therefore, demultiplexers according to embodiments of the present invention can be inexpensively mass produced.

In some embodiments, the demultiplexer module includes an integrally formed barrel. The barrel is positioned relative to the first section in order that the first section receives a WDM beam from an optical fiber positioned and held by the barrel. A barrel includes a fiber access and fiber stop. An optical fiber positioned in the fiber access at the fiber stop is, then, aligned with the first section of the demultiplexer module. In operation, an optical fiber that can carry the

WDM optical signal is positioned into the barrel and the light from the optical fiber is collimated by the collimating lens. In some embodiments, the barrel can be formed separately and attached to a post that is integrally formed with the demultiplexing module.

In some embodiments, the collimated light beam is incident on the diffraction grating substantially normal to the internal surface of the diffraction grating. The focusing lens of the third section, then, is positioned with respect to the external surface of the diffraction grating, from which the angularly separated individual beams are emitted, so as to capture a first or higher order diffraction peak from the diffraction grating. The focusing lens then focuses the individually separated beams of light from the diffraction grating onto an array of optical detectors. Each of the optical detectors, then, detects light of a particular wavelength. In some embodiments, light from individually separated beams are coupled into optical fibers, which then transmit light of separate data transmission channels corresponding to the separate wavelengths of the individual beams. In some embodiments, where the module is utilized in a multiplexer, optical detectors may be replaced with optical sources that emit light of appropriate wavelengths.

In some embodiments, the diffraction grating is a one-dimensional ruled grating. Some embodiments include a two-dimensional ruled grating. In some embodiments, the diffraction grating is formed so as to couple substantially all of the incident light into the first order diffraction peak so as to reduce the amount of incident radiation lost to other orders of diffraction peaks (e.g., the zeroth order).

In some embodiments, a multiplexer system can be formed with the demultiplexer mounting by coupling light of different wavelengths onto the transmission grating at the appropriate angle to couple that light into an optical fiber. In these embodiments, the optical detectors of the demultiplexer can be replaced by optical sources of the appropriate wavelengths to form a multiplexer. These optical sources can be optical fibers carrying individual channels of optical data at the appropriate optical wavelengths.

These and other embodiments are further described below along with the following Figures.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

FIGS. 1A, 1B and 1C show an optical diagram of a demultiplexer according to the present invention.

FIG. 2 shows a cross-section drawing of a demultiplexer according to the present invention.

FIGS. 3A and 3B show three-dimensional drawing of a demultiplexer according to the present invention.

FIG. 4 shows a projection of spatially separated optical beams in a demultiplexer according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FIG. 1A shows an optical ray diagram of a demultiplexer system 100 according to the present invention. Demultiplexer system 100 includes a transmission diffraction grating 110. Diffraction grating 110 is formed on the surface of a plastic part 150 and, therefore, has an internal surface and an external surface. Diffraction grating 110 can be positioned so that light beam 120 is incident substantially normal to the internal surface of grating 110. Transmission grating 110 includes ruled lines 140 which can be blazed in order to preferentially couple light into selected orders of diffraction peaks. Angularly separated beams 122 (including individual

beams 122-1 through 122-N) are emitted from the external surface of diffraction grating 110.

FIG. 1C shows the external surface (opposite the internal surface on which light beam 120 is incident) of diffraction grating 110. The external surface of diffraction grating 110 as shown in FIG. 1C can have parallel formed ruled lines 140 which are formed in plastic part 150. Ruled lines 140 can be blazed in order to preferentially couple light into selected orders of diffraction peaks, for example into the first order diffraction peak. Rulings 140 can be formed on the surface of plastic part 150 by forming trenches in the surface of plastic part 150 with appropriately shaped side walls. Although the particular example of transmission grating 110 of FIG. 1C has a one-dimensional ruled grating, other transmission gratings, for example a two-dimensionally ruled grating, can also be utilized.

The diffraction pattern resulting from grating 110 includes zero-th order ($n=0$), first order ($n=1$) and higher order diffraction peaks. As shown in FIG. 1B, all but the zero-th order pattern separates incoming beam 120 into individually separate beams 122-1 through 122-N based on the individual wavelengths of light in WDM beam 120. Beam 120, then, is demultiplexed into its separate wavelengths, for example, within the first-order ($n=1$) diffraction peak 122. In some embodiments, diffraction grating 110 can be blazed to preferentially couple light from WDM beam 120 into the first order diffraction peak of grating 110.

As shown in FIG. 1B, beam 120 can be separated with a larger angular separation in higher order peaks, however, the intensity of light coupled into those diffraction peaks is usually much less than the intensity coupled into the zero-th order peak and the first-order peak. In some embodiments, grating 110 has rulings 140 blazed appropriately to couple substantially all of beam 120 into the first order diffraction peak (e.g., about 95%).

In one example, diffraction grating 110 can have 2000 lines/mm over 1.5 mm. Additionally, beam 120 can include optical channels at wavelengths of 1275 nm, 1300 nm, 1325 nm, and 1350 nm. In some embodiments, molded surface relief gratings are capable of achieving about 1 μm trench depths and greater than about 1 μm grating pitch. In accordance with some embodiments of the present invention, a trench depth of about 0.5 μm and a pitch of about 5 μm can be used. In some embodiments, the grating can be an 8 level grating.

The first order diffraction beam 122, which includes individual beams 122-1 through 122-N, is, then, angled at an angle θ from a normal to the surface of transmission grating 110, where the angle θ represents the central angle of individual beams 122-1 through 122-N, θ_1 through θ_N , respectively. The angle θ , then, can represent the average angular position of individual beams 122-1 through 122-N from the normal, θ_1 through θ_N , respectively. In some embodiments, the angle θ represents the average of the angular separation of the outside individual beams 122-1 and 122-N, θ_1 and θ_N , respectively.

Each of individual beams 122-1 through 122-N, separated by wavelengths, are distributed about the angle θ in a plane determined by the rulings of grating 110. With a linearly ruled diffraction grating such as the example of grating 110 shown in FIG. 1C, individual beams 122-1 through 122-N lie in a plane defined by the normal direction to the surface of grating 110 and a direction perpendicular to rulings 140 of grating 110 (denoted by angle $\phi=0$ in the plane of diffraction grating 110). If grating 110 is a two-dimensional grating (i.e., rulings 140 include rulings in two dimensions), then individual beams 122-1 through 122-N may be directed

along a direction designated by radial angle ϕ in the plane of the surface of grating **110** and at an azimuthal angle θ from the normal to the surface of grating **110**.

In some embodiments, diffraction beam **122** is at an angle θ of about 45° and ϕ being 0° . Furthermore, individual beams **122-1** through **122-N** of each of the channels are angularly separated by about 2° . In an example with $N=4$ having wavelengths of $\lambda_1=1275$ nm, $\lambda_2=1300$ nm, $\lambda_3=1325$ nm, $\lambda_4=1350$ nm, and with transmission grating **110** having 2000 lines/mm, as described above, each of individual beams **122-1** through **122-4** can be angled at an angle of θ_1 about 42° , θ_2 about 44° , θ_3 about 46° , and θ_4 about 48° , respectively, from **t** to the surface of transmission grating **110**. Over a transmission distance of about 12 mm, individual beams **122-1** through **122-4** can then be separated by about 250 μm .

With a linearly ruled grating, each of individual beams **122-1** through **122-N** are directed in a direction perpendicular to the rulings **140** of transmission grating **110**. The angular separation allows each of the separate beams in diffraction beam **122** to be incident on a corresponding one of detectors **125-1** through **125-N** in a detector array **125**. Therefore, the detectors in detector array **125** provide electrical signals in response to optical signals at each of the individual wavelengths of the individual beams in diffraction beam **122**. In embodiments as discussed above with 250 μm separations over the transmission length (i.e., the distance between the top surface of diffraction grating **110** and the collection surface of detector array **125**) of demultiplexer **100**, then, the pitch of detectors **125-1** through **125-4** is about 250 μm . Although detector array **125** having the appropriate pitch is relatively inexpensive in increased cost over less compact systems, the greatly increased expense of forming optical filters of appropriate sizes to provide a pitch of 250 μm is not required.

FIG. 2 shows a cross-sectional drawing of a demultiplexer **250** according to the present invention. Demultiplexer **250** includes a demultiplexer module **200**. Demultiplexer module **200** can be described as including individual sections **201**, **202** and **203**. Sections **201**, **202** and **203** are integrally formed as a single piece to form demultiplexer module **200**. Section **201** receives WDM beam **120** and directs beam **120** onto the internal surface of diffraction grating **110**. Diffraction grating **110**, then, is formed on an external surface of section **201**. Section **203** receives individual beams **122-1** through **122-N** and directs individual beams **122-1** through **122-N** onto the surface of detector array **125**, couples them into individual optical fibers, or receives light from optical sources (if module **200** is included in a multiplexer system). Section **202** provides structural support and spatially aligns sections **201** and **203**. Sections **201**, **202**, and **203** are integrally formed by, for example, injection molding with an optically transparent material. Examples of optically transparent materials that can be utilized in forming demultiplexer **200** include Ultem® or Lexan®, both produced by General Electric Corporation.

In some embodiments, section **201** of demultiplexer **200** can include collimating lens **220** and reflection surface **210** along with transmission grating **110**. Collimating lens **220** can be positioned relative to an optical fiber **240**, which can carry WDM multiplexed beam **120**, so as to collimate the light beam emitted from optical fiber **240**. In some embodiments, lens **220** can be an aspheric lens that collimates light from a 0.3 NA fiber output.

Collimated light beam **120** can be reflected from reflector **210** and directed onto the back surface of diffraction grating **110**. Reflector **210** can be formed as a total internal reflector

or can include a reflective backing such as, for example, a gold or silver film. Further, reflection **210**, as a total internal reflector, can be coated on the surface opposite the surface on which beam **120** is incident (i.e., the surface exposed external to diffraction mounting **200**), with thin films in order to enhance reflection of beam **120**.

Diffraction grating **110** can be formed in the surface of section **201** during the injection molding process. In some embodiments, diffraction grating **110** can be a one-dimensional ruled grating having evenly spaced trenches formed on the external surface of section **201** of demultiplexer module **200**. In other embodiments, diffraction grating **110** can be a two-dimensional ruled grating, as discussed above. In some embodiments, diffraction grating **110** can be formed after injection molding other portions of demultiplexer module **200** by, for example, a number of etching processes. In the case where grating **110** is fabricated as a separate piece, grating **110** can be injection molded in a temperature-controlled environment and in a mold containing the relief microstructure to be replicated, referred to as the master. The master can be fabricated using lithographic fabrication of multiple levels of structures by using multiple steps of photoresist application, lithography and etching.

Lens and detector section **203** can include integrally formed focusing lens **222**. Lens and detector section **203** may also include support **224** formed surrounding lens **222**. Support **224**, within which lens **222** can be formed, is integrally formed with support section **202**. A detector array **232** (which includes detectors **232-1** through **232-N**) mounted on array holder **231** can be positioned on support **224** and aligned such that individually separated beams of light **122-1** through **122-N** are incident upon detectors **125-1** through **125-N**, respectively. Each of detectors **125-1** through **125-N** can provide electrical signals on electrical connections **232-1** through **232-N**, respectively. Alternatively, each of detectors **125-1** through **125-N** may be optical fibers so that light from each of individual beams **122-1** through **122-N** is coupled into corresponding optical fibers.

Optical detectors **125-1** through **125-N** of detector array **125** can be any optical detector device, including GaAs, Si, or InGaAs based photodetectors in either discrete or array form, optical fibers coupled to receive light corresponding to individual channels, or optical sources if demultiplexer **200** is utilized as a multiplexer instead of a demultiplexer. Optical sources can include photodiodes, vertical cavity surface-emitting lasers (VCSELs), or light carrying optical fiber.

Support **202** connects section **201** with **203** and is integrally formed with section **201** and **203**. Support **202** is shaped so that section **203** is aligned with individual beams **122-1** through **122-N**. In some embodiments, support **201** is a rectangular member with long axis angled at angle θ relative to a normal to the surface of grating **110**.

In operation, light beam **120** from optical fiber **240** is collimated by lens **220** and directed onto transmission grating **110** by reflective surface **210**. In some embodiments, light beam **120** is incident normally on an internal surface (i.e., internally to section **201**) of transmission grating **110**. Separated beam **122**, including individual beams **122-1** through **122-N**, is emitted from the opposite surface (i.e., the external surface) of transmission grating **110** at an angle θ from the normal to the opposite surface of transmission grating **110**, as discussed above. Individual beams **122-1** through **122-N** propagate outside of demultiplexer mounting **200** and reenters demultiplexer mounting **200** substantially normally at surface **226** of lens and detector portion **203**. Surface **226**, in some embodiments, can be coated with an

anti-reflective film to increase the efficiency of demultiplexer **250**. Lens **222** formed opposite surface **226** in lens and detector portion **203** focuses individual beams **122-1** through **122-N** onto detectors **125-1** through **125-N**, respectively, of detector array **125**.

Demultiplexer module **200** can be formed as a single unit by an injection molding process, eliminating the steps of aligning through the optical system. The remaining alignment problem is reduced to insuring that fiber **240** is appropriately aligned with lens **220** and detector array **124** is appropriately aligned with lens **222**. In some embodiments, a barrel support can be integrally formed with demultiplexer module **200** in order to align fiber **240**. Further, alignment of support **231**, where detector array **125** is mounted, can be accomplished through providing appropriate guide grooves in support **224** of demultiplexer module **200**.

Further, demultiplexer module **200** provides a compact package. In some embodiments, demultiplexer module **200** can have a length L_1 of about 12 mm and a width L_2 of about 12.5 mm. Further, demultiplexer module **200** can have a cylindrical or rectangular cross section with width (or diameter) of about 3 mm. In some embodiments, where the WDM grid includes wavelengths of 1275 nm, 1300 nm, 1325 nm, and 1350 nm, then lens **220** can be an aspherical lens with characteristics such as a radius of curvature equal to 500 μm and a conic constant equal to -2.5 and lens **222** can have characteristics such as a radius of curvature equal to 300 μm and a conic constant equal to -2.5 .

FIG. 3A shows a three-dimensional view of an embodiment of demultiplexer module **200** according to the present invention. Demultiplexer module **200** includes sections **201**, **202** and **203**, as discussed above. Further, a post **310** can be integrally formed with section **201**. In some embodiments, barrel **320** is removably affixed to part **310** and operates as a guide and positioner for optical fiber **240**. Barrel **320** can be positioned on support **326**. Support **326** can be a ring which either protrudes or is formed as a trench with which barrel **320** mates. Barrel **320** can also be epoxied to part **310** on support **326** in order to provide better structural integrity to demultiplexer **250**. In some embodiments, barrel **320** can be integrally formed with demultiplexer module **200** by injection molding. Barrel **320** includes fiber access **322** with fiber stop **324**. In operation, when optical fiber **240** is inserted into fiber access **322** to fiber stop **324**, optical fiber **240** is aligned with lens **220**.

In some embodiments, fiber access **322** of barrel **320** has a depth of about 4 mm before encountering fiber stop **324**. The end of inserted fiber **240**, which is flush with fiber stop **324**, can then be separated by a distance of about 1 mm from the vertex of lens **220**. Fiber access **322** can have a diameter of about 2.5 mm in order to accept single mode, multi-mode, silica, or plastic optical fibers. In some embodiments, the outer diameter of barrel **320** can be about 4 mm. Barrel **320** can be integrally molded with demultiplexer module **200** or can be detachably coupled to post **310** which is integrally molded with demultiplexer module **200**.

FIG. 3B shows a three-dimensional drawing of a demultiplexer module **200** according to the present invention where transmission grating **110** is shown rather than reflection surface **210**, as is shown in FIG. 3A.

FIG. 4 shows a beam profile at detector array **125** of an $N=4$ embodiment of a demultiplexer **250** according to the present invention. Each of independent beams **122-1** through **122-4** of FIG. 4 is resultant from a particular embodiment of demultiplexer module **200** utilized with a WDM system having $\lambda_1=1275$ nm, $\lambda_2=1300$ nm, $\lambda_3=1325$

nm, and $\lambda_4=1350$ nm. From FIG. 2, demultiplexer module **200** has length $L_1=12$ mm, width $L_2=12.5$ mm, and thickness $L_3=6$ mm (see FIG. 3A). Furthermore, grating **110** is characterized as having 2000 lines/mm resulting in θ being about 45° (θ_1 about 42° , θ_2 about 44° , θ_3 about 46° , θ_4 about 48°). Lens **220** is characterized as having a radius of curvature equal to 500 μm and a conic constant equal to -2.5 and lens **222** is characterized as having a radius of curvature equal to 300 μm and a conic constant equal to -2.5 . The surface of detector array **125** is positioned a distance d of about 500 μm from the base of lens **222** of section **203**. Under those conditions, individual beams **122-1** through **122-4** are well resolved with separations between beams **122-1** and **122-2**, between beams **122-2** and **122-3**, and between beams **122-3** and **122-4** (separations S_1 , S_2 , and S_3 , respectively) of about 250 μm .

The embodiments described above are exemplary only and are not intended to be limiting. One skilled in the art will recognize variations that are intended to be within the spirit and scope of this disclosure. As such, the invention is limited only by the following claims.

We claim:

1. A demultiplexer, comprising:

a single molded piece comprising an integrated first section, second section, third section, and diffraction grating,

the first section capable of receiving a WDM beam, the diffraction grating integrally formed on an external surface of the first section and an external surface of the single molded piece, the WDM beam being directed onto an internal surface of the diffraction grating, and the diffraction grating providing angularly separated beams on an external surface of the diffraction grating; and

the third section positioned relative to the first section to receive spatially separated light beams of a selected diffraction order from the diffraction grating.

2. The demultiplexer of claim 1, further including a reflective surface integrally formed on the first section that directs the WDM beam received into the first section onto a bottom surface of the diffraction grating.

3. The demultiplexer of claim 2, wherein the reflective surface is coated external to the first section with thin film to enhance internal reflection of the WDM beam.

4. The demultiplexer of claim 2, wherein the reflective surface is coated with a reflective film.

5. The demultiplexer of claim 4, wherein the reflective film is a gold film.

6. The demultiplexer of claim 4, wherein the reflective film is a silver film.

7. The demultiplexer of claim 1, wherein the first section includes an integrally formed collimating lens integrally formed into the single piece, the integrally formed collimating lens collimating the WDM beam received from an optical fiber.

8. The demultiplexer of claim 7, further including a barrel integrally formed into the single piece with the first section,

the barrel capable of receiving an optical fiber and aligning the optical fiber with the collimating lens.

9. The demultiplexer of claim 8, wherein the barrel includes a fiber access and a fiber stop.

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- 10. The demultiplexer of claim 7, further including a post integrally formed into the single piece with the first section,
the post capable of receiving a barrel,
the barrel capable of receiving an optical fiber and align- 5
ing the optical fiber with the collimating lens.
- 11. The demultiplexer of claim 10, wherein the barrel includes a fiber access and a fiber stop.
- 12. The demultiplexer of claim 1, wherein the third section includes a focusing lens. 10
- 13. The demultiplexer of claim 12, wherein the third section further includes a support around the focusing lens.
- 14. The demultiplexer of claim 13, wherein a detector array can be mounted on the support so that the 15
spatially separated beams are directed onto individual detectors of the detector array.

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- 15. The demultiplexer of claim 13, wherein optical fibers are arranged to receive individual ones of the spatially separated beams.
- 16. A demultiplexer, comprising:
means for separating an input light beam into constituent parts having a diffraction means;
means for detecting the constituent parts from the means for separating;
means for aligning the means for separating with the means for detecting, wherein the means for separating, the means for detecting, and the means for aligning are integrated as a molded single piece component, and the diffraction means is on an external surface of the means for separating and an external surface of the molded single piece component.

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